

Message Text

SECRET

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44

ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-05 IO-10

EB-07 NRC-05 OES-03 FEAE-00 ERDA-05 /094 W

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R 021437Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1999

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY LONDON

CNO

USCINCEUR

CINCUSNAVEUR

CINCLANTFLT

S E C R E T ATHENS 031

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MNUC, MARR, GR

SUBJECT: NPW VISITS TO MEDITERRANEAN

REF: STATE 294701

1. WHILE THERE ARE NO RECORDS EXTANT IN EMBASSY OR DAO CONCERNING EARLIER VISITS BY NUCLEAR POWERED SURFACE SHIPS, DEFATT, WHO WAS ASSISTANT NAVAL ATTACHE WHEN INITIAL VISIT BY USS ENTERPRISE TOOK PLACE IN EARLY 1960S, RECALLS THAT PRIOR TO GOG'S GRANTING PERMISSION FOR SUCH UNITS TO VISIT GREEK PORTS, A VISIT WAS ARRANGED TO SOUDA BAY FOR MEMBERS OF GREEK AEC TO INSPECT AND BE BRIEFED ON USS ENTERPRISE. SUBSEQUENT VISITS BY USS ENTERPRISE, ET AL., TO ATHENS PROCEEDED WITHOUT DIFFICULTY. IN PERIOD 1964 TO MID-1974, SSN'S VISITED ATHENS APPARENTLY WITHOUT UNTOWARD INCIDENT. SINCE MID-1974 NO USN SHIPS HAVE MADE PORT VISITS IN GREECE OTHER THAN USE BY SHIPS OF HOMEPORTED DESTROYER

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SQUADRON AND BY OTHER SMALL, CONVENTIONALLY-POWERED

SURFACE WARSHIPS OF ELEFSIS PIER, WHICH USE IS NOW AT LEAST TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED. EMBASSY HAS ENCOURAGED USNAVEUR TO SEEK GOG PERMISSION FOR A LIMITED NUMBER OF VISITS BY SMALLER SIXTH FLEET UNITS TO ATHENS AREA (I.E., NOT ELEFSIS PIER) BEGINNING IN JANUARY 1975. GOG REACTION CANNOT BE PREDICTED WITH SURETY.

2. ALTHOUGH INITIAL APPROVAL FOR NPW VISITS WAS GRANTED EARLY IN 1960S BY A DEMOCRATICALLY-CONSTITUTED GOG, THE NEXT REQUEST FOR AN NPW TO VISIT GREECE WILL BE THE FIRST TIME THE CURRENT GOG WILL HAVE TO FACE THE ISSUE. WHILE WE WOULD HOPE THAT THE PRECEDENT OF PREVIOUS GOG APPROVAL AND HISTORY OF EVENT-FREE VISITS WILL RESULT IN ROUTINE APPROVAL ON SAME BASIS AS OTHER UNITS, ASSUMING THAT VISITS BY CONVENTIONALLY-POWERED SHIPS WILL HAVE RESUMED BY THAT TIME, WE CANNOT BE CERTAIN THIS WILL BE THE CASE. ON THE CONTRARY, THERE IS A DISTINCT POSSIBILITY THAT THE VOCIFEROUS LEFT-WING OPPOSITION IN PARLIAMENT, AND THE STRIDENTLY ANTI-AMERICAN PRESS, WILL RESURRECT ALL OF THE ARGUMENTS AND CANARDS WHICH HAVE BEEN THROWN UP ELSEWHERE AS REASONS FOR REJECTING NPW VISITS.

3. WE BELIEVE THE BEST WAY TO PREPARE FOR VISITS TO GREEK PORTS BY THE NUCLEAR POWERED SURFACE SHIPS MENTIONED IN REFTEL IS (A) FIRST TO ENSURE THAT VISITS BY CONVENTIONALLY-POWERED UNITS OF THE SIXTH FLEET HAVE ONCE AGAIN BECOME COMMONPLACE, AND (B) TO INCLUDE IN SUCH VISITS ONE OR MORE BY SSN'S PRIOR TO ATTEMPTING VISITS BY THE NUCLEAR POWERED SURFACE SHIPS. SINCE ATHENS VISITS ARE ALWAYS MORE CONSPICUOUS, AN SSN VISIT INITIALLY TO ANOTHER PORT, AND PERHAPS THEN TO ATHENS, MIGHT BE THE BEST WAY OF EASING THE GOG BACK INTO ROUTINE APPROVAL OF NPW VISITS BEFORE IT IS CONFRONTED BY THE PUBLIC PRESSURES TO WHICH IT HAS EXHIBITED SENSITIVITY IN THE LAST YEAR AND A HALF.

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